

**DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

Secretary Roberta Gassman
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-7552
FAX: (608) 266-1784
www.dwd.state.wi.us



**State of Wisconsin
Governor Jim Doyle**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY SERVICES**

Secretary Helene Nelson
1 West Wilson Street
P.O. Box 7850
Madison, WI 53707-7850
Telephone: (608) 266-9622
FAX: (608) 266-7882
www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov

**TO: Economic Support Supervisors
Economic Support Lead Workers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers**

**FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
Communications Section
Bureau of Health Care Eligibility**

BHCE/BWP OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 04-21

DATE: 04/12/04

FS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC	<input type="checkbox"/>
CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CC	<input type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	WtW	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	EP	<input type="checkbox"/>			

PRIORITY: HIGH

**SUBJECT: POLICY Q&A ON EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR WISCONSIN
WORKS APPLICANTS**

CROSS REFERENCE: BWP Operations Memo 03-77; BWP Operations Memo 04-14

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to share the answers to some policy questions that were raised by a W-2 agency after the issuance of Operations Memo 03-77, Educational Needs Assessment for Wisconsin Works (W-2) Applicants.

POLICY Q&A

1. Operations Memo 03-77 states, "The educational needs assessment must always be completed before making a W-2 placement decision." Does this mean for all applicants of W-2 or is their discretion?

ANSWER:

All applicants who meet financial and non-financial eligibility requirements must have an educational needs assessment.

2. For example in the initial job readiness screening that is currently done at the FEP interview, we gather education information regarding High School (HS) completion (including GED/HSED) as well as other post HS training or education. If an individual has HS credentials and/or post HS training (i.e., associate degrees, tech degrees, certificates, etc) - are we REQUIRED to conduct a FORMAL assessment such as TABE/WRAT before making a placement decision?

ANSWER:

Some level of educational needs assessment must be done with all new applicants. Agencies have discretion to determine exactly what the assessment entails. Agencies are encouraged to use educational testing tools such as the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) to help determine education and training levels. But for someone who has demonstrated their reading and math skills through attainment of post-secondary education, a less formal assessment may be more appropriate (see case examples in Operations Memo 03-77).

3. We have been told that assessments could not be required of applicants and recipients. Has that policy changed regarding educational assessments?

ANSWER:

This policy is required by state law.

4. Is it now considered a pre-eligibility requirement? What is the consequence to an applicant who refuses or misses appointments for the educational testing?

ANSWER:

Treat the Education Needs Assessment requirement like the requirement that applicants must have an informal assessment. Use the information that you are able to gather to determine appropriate placement and activities.

Before referring an applicant for a formal educational assessment such as the TABE, the FEP should fully explain the purpose and benefits of the assessment and encourage the applicant to engage in assessment activity. Through the discussion, the applicant should be made aware that test results will enable his/her FEP to make better-informed decisions about:

- The individual's W-2 placement;
- The types of activities and the number of hours the individual will be assigned to; and
- Any special services or work site accommodations that the individual may need.

If the applicant refuses to attend a scheduled educational needs assessment, such as the TABE and there is no information available as to the participant's current math and reading comprehension level, apply the same criteria you would for other types of assessments. That is to say, if the individual refuses to cooperate with completing an educational assessment and there are unresolved factual issues as to whether a literacy barrier exists, the W-2 agency may proceed to work with the individual as though s/he does not have a literacy barrier.

5. Can the decision for making a ladder placement be delayed due to availability of testing times (or missed testing by the applicant) – or must the tests be completed within the 7 day window between FEP appointment and placement decision?

ANSWER:

The agency needs to do some level of educational needs assessment before placement, but should not delay placement in order to get a formal educational assessment completed first. The application process can be extended up to 30 days only if the applicant needs extra time to meet verification requirements. A formal educational assessment, such as the TABE may still be completed after placement if there was not time to complete it prior to placement.

SELECTING EDUCATIONAL TESTING TOOLS

Operations Memo 04-14 provides information about which educational tests are considered valid testing tools for meeting the requirements of the Literacy and Numeracy W-2 Performance Standard. The valid testing tools are TABE, ABLE, AMES, WorkKeys, CASAS, BEST, and SPL. If you choose to use another testing tool (e.g., WRAT) to meet the requirements of the Educational Needs Assessment, you will need to readminister with one of the valid testing tools, if you place the participant in one of the following activities: Basic Education, Literacy Skills, or English as a Second Language. The Literacy and Numeracy Performance Standard does require that the same pre and post test are used to record an attainment.

CONTACTS

BHCE CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

★Program Categories – FS – Food Stamps, MA – Medicaid, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – Food Stamp Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC - Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WtW – Welfare to Work, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.

DWD/DWS/BDS/HH